

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A central encryption management system, comprising:
 - a plurality of communications terminals for performing data communications;
 - an encryption apparatus which can be connected between the plurality of communications terminals;
 - the apparatus including encryption/decryption means for performing an encrypting process and a decrypting process on data to terminate encryption-based security between the communications terminals having the encrypting capability ~~and/or~~ and the non-encrypting capability; and
 - a manager terminal for inputting ~~various information for controlling encrypted data communications~~ information for the presence or absence of encryption/decryption process, the availability of packet communications, the encryption level, the time period to perform encryption, the encryption policy, and the encryption key into each of the encryption apparatus and the communications terminals remotely from the manager terminal over a network, so that settings for the encrypted data communications on each of the apparatus and the terminals are completed,
 - wherein the various information includes at least one of the presence/absence of the encrypting/decrypting process, the communicability indicating that a packet is discarded between specific terminals, the encryption level, the time period for the encryption, the encryption policy for each division;
 - wherein the plurality of communications terminals, the manager terminal, and the encryption apparatus are connected via a cable or wireless network;
 - wherein the encryption apparatus further includes bridge means for allowing data to be outputted as it is from another port without any routing process; and

wherein the data has been received with one of the plurality of ports of the encryption apparatus and the encrypting or decrypting process has been performed on the data.

2. (Original) The central encryption management system according to claim 1, wherein the encryption/decryption means performs the encrypting process and the decrypting process on data, so that the encryption apparatus receives and retransmits data in the form of encrypted data from and to the communications terminal having the encrypting capability, and the encryption apparatus receives and retransmits the data in the form of non-encrypted data from and to the communications terminal having no encrypting capability.

3. (Canceled).

4. (Original) The central encryption management system according to claim 1, wherein the encryption apparatus further includes setting information storage means for storing the information inputted from the manager terminal, in which the inputted information is used when controlling the encrypting process and the decrypting process, and the encryption apparatus controls the encrypting process and the decrypting process by comparing the information stored in the setting information storage means with header information of a data packet of the data received with one of the plurality of ports.

5. (Currently Amended) A central encryption management system, comprising:
a plurality of communications terminals for performing data communications;
an encryption apparatus having a plurality of ports which can be connected between the plurality of communications terminals, in which the encryption apparatus performs encrypting or decrypting process on data which has been received with ~~one of the plurality of ports~~ one port and then which has passed through a data link layer and a physical layer, and the encryption apparatus outputs the encrypted or decrypted data from another port through a data link layer and a physical layer without passing said data to a network layer in which routing between networks is controlled; and

a manager terminal for inputting ~~various information for controlling encrypted data communications~~ information for the presence or absence of encryption/decryption process, the availability of packet communications, the encryption level, the time period to perform encryption, the encryption policy, and the encryption key, into each of the encryption apparatus and the communications terminals remotely from the manager terminal over a network, so that a setting of each of the apparatus and terminals for communicating encrypted data is completed,

wherein the various information includes at least one of the presence/absence of the encrypting/decrypting process, the communicability indicating that a packet is discarded between specific terminals, the encryption level, the time period for the encryption, the encryption policy for each division;

wherein the plurality of communications terminals, the encryption apparatus, and the manager terminal are connected via a cable or wireless network.

6. (Original) The central encryption management system according to claim 5, wherein the encryption apparatus further includes setting information storage means for storing the information inputted from the manager terminal, in which the inputted information is used when controlling the encrypting process and the decrypting process, and

the encryption apparatus controls the encrypting process and the decrypting process by comparing the information stored in the setting information storage means with header information of a data packet of the data received with one of the plurality of ports.